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THEOSOPHY

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY

THE STUDY OF OCCULT SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

AND ARYAN LITERATURE

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I *To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color;*

II *The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and*

III *The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.*

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Complacency, mediocrity, and intolerance are our greatest enemies.
—WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS

THEOSOPHY

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THE RELEASE OF MIND

FOR some years, now, commentators and social critics have deplored the apparent loss of a sense of tradition, or a feeling for history, in the young men and women who are today attending colleges and universities. There is an obvious break, for example, in the psychological continuity of the revolutionary movement. Always, in the past, the radical idealism of youth has been the means of transmitting the nobler conceptions of human freedom and social order from one generation to another. This function of youth and of students seems not to be operating today. The young, on the other hand, are psychologically suspended in midair, without noticeable contact or conscious touch with the traditions of civilization.

It is true, of course, that "social" issues have become transformed from political questions to mainly humanitarian questions. The abolition of radical distinctions and the inequities founded on those distinctions is not so much a political issue as it is a human value. The great question of peace and the renunciation of military violence, another central preoccupation of thoughtful youth, belongs in the same category: this has not to do with rival social systems or theories, but with the brotherhood of man.

So, in view of these developments, it might be urged that the changing environment of moral issues is largely responsible for at least some of the differences in the young.

It may be, however, that another great factor is at work. The

twentieth century is now moving onward toward the climactic moment of a further incarnation of *Manas,* so clearly described by H.P.B. in her letters to the American Theosophists. It is the lower mind, after all, which is so much involved with memory, and it is the psychic aspect of the individual which takes its shape and inclinations entirely from the accumulated impressions of the past. Thus the "break with tradition" noted in the young may have an evolutionary as well as a societal cause. The issues which the awakened *Manas* confronts are the timeless issues of being human, not the ideological issues which present themselves only in the matrix of the flow of history and the circumstantial relationships of social existence.

To some extent, therefore, the independence and apparent unrelatedness of the young of today may be signs of a deeper humanity, instead of merely an indifference to questions which have held the attention of their parents and elders.

The encounter with mind, as a principle in itself, operating under conditions of increased self-consciousness, will no doubt be a somewhat novel experience for people of the present generation. The mind, in these terms, is a direct expression of egoity. This means that the values with which it is concerned are of timeless immediacy, and the intelligence so filled with egoic intentions will exhibit the same careless unconcern with the past as the poet, the artist, and the philosopher. Fears and insecurities, so characteristic of the personal man—the psychic self—will have little scope in consciousness of this sort. It follows that human beings so endowed will exhibit an untaught freedom in relation to worries which others find difficult to master, and the intuitions hungered after with so much longing by previous generations will belong naturally to the ever-present awareness that has become the rule rather than the exception.

There is of course a darker side to the cycle soon to be in full swing. The principle of awakening mind will not in all cases obtain the hospitality of the psycho-physical organism. The perceptions of egoity can be shut out by all-pervasive intoxications of sense, by addictions of various sorts, and by rampant emotions which, through unreined impulse, replace the autonomy of the reincarnating ego. The letters of H.P.B., again, are a source of warning in respect to these phenomena of the uncontrolled psyche, which may be expected as concomitants of the cycle, and as antithetical influ-

ences working contrary to the insights of the unleashed mind.

Theosophists sometimes feel the oppressions of human blindness and apathy almost too difficult to bear, and these, of course, will not blow away like dry leaves in the fall as the cycle matures. But the other, positive qualities of the cycle—that of awakening manasic perception, and the natural cleavings to principle which *Manas* brings—are plainly on the way, with their promise of removed obstacles, fresh enthusiasm, and a strength of spontaneous origin in the very nature of man.

From Ideologies to Ideals

Through rationalization one tries to make it appear as though an action is motivated by reasonable and moral motives, thus covering up the fact that it is caused by motives which are in contrast to a person's conscious thinking. The rationalization is mostly sham, and has only the negative function of permitting a person to act wrongly, yet without awareness that he is acting irrationally or immorally. The ideology has a similar function, yet in one point there is an important difference. Take the example of Christian teaching; the teachings of Christ, the ideals of humility, brotherly love, justice, charity, etc., were once genuine ideals which moved the hearts of people to such a degree that they were willing to give their lives for the sake of these ideals. But throughout history these ideals have been misused to serve as rationalizations for purposes which were their very opposite. Independent and rebellious spirits have been killed, peasants have been exploited and oppressed, wars have been blessed, hatred of the enemy has been encouraged in the name of these very ideals. Inasmuch as this was the case, ideology was not different from rationalization. But history shows us that an ideology has also a life of its own. Even though the words of Christ were misused, they were kept alive, they remained in the memory of the people, and again and again they were taken seriously and retransformed, as it were, from ideologies into ideals.

—Erich Fromm

ON FIRST ACQUAINTANCE— "THE SECRET DOCRINE"

V

> As Confucius did not admit of a future life and the Chinese Buddhists reject the idea of *One* Creator, accepting one cause and its numberless effects, they are misunderstood by the believers in a *personal* God. . . . The "great Extreme" as the commencement "of changes" (transmigrations) is the shortest and perhaps the most suggestive of all Cosmogonies, for those who, like the Confucianists, love virtue for its own sake, and try to do good unselfishly without perpetually looking to reward and profit. (*The Secret Doctrine* I, 440.)

THE wonderful thing about Madame Blavatsky's works is not so much that she gives us a promise of psychological millennium as that she shows us how to keep trying with a certain disregard for the time-cycle in which we happen to be working; the "rate of our progress" is not so much our concern, nor even the problems of failure or success, but rather the task of accommodating our life to a pattern of continuing effort. The *Gita* goes into this idea in a very specific way, whereas H.P.B. does it more indirectly by the way in which she leads one's reflections. *The Secret Doctrine,* for instance, draws one's mental reflection to the recurring idea of *timeless* effort and a vision of each *apparent* success or goal achieved, as a plateau—an assimilation point, so to speak, just as between the ingestive and evacuative processes of the body there occurs the work of digestion.

Each reading of *The Secret Doctrine* will destroy a certain number of our current errors, as well as leave a certain amount of new knowledge, and between the errors destroyed and the new knowledge assimilated there may emerge a *new base* from which the next reading can be made—each trip bearing results *sui generis.*

It may be objected that "creation" and "destruction" are used in the illustration, but that the process of assimilation is left out. By returning to the analogy of the body, we notice that while ingesting and expelling are conscious acts, the process of assimilation is completely unconscious. In like manner, it might be that one's assimilation of the knowledge in *The Secret Doctrine* occurs in at

least a *relatively* unconscious manner. Thus, those who thirst to see their progress as it proceeds will be little interested in such works, for it furnishes one with no daily "tote board" of the precise work in progress; as H.P.B. puts it, the reality in this world must generally be searched for before or after the event.

When we come to a new understanding we can describe it, when we give up old ideas for new we can also describe that, but the growth between the two plateaus—what of that? Maybe it is somewhat like the thirsty mountain traveller, so engrossed in his arduous travel that no large or usefully definite view of the area he is traversing becomes possible until he arrives at a plateau which allows him to rest and look around. At this point he may make evaluations regarding the work accomplished, the work to be done, and the interaction between the two. The "before us" and "behind us" join hands, in this part of the cycle. The compass is adjusted, and another cycle begins.

With patience and a willingness to forego seeking a sure description of the time cycle in which one works, it might be interesting, as an experiment, to view each reading of *The Secret Doctrine* as the cyclic laminations on a "tree" of knowledge we are building. While it is true that each lamination of the mighty Sequoia *appears* insignificant in its singularity, this illusion melts when it joins a larger context.

After a few readings of *The Secret Doctrine,* it is likely one will begin to possess a group of evaluative contrasts, contrasts revealing to the student the *incredibly degenerated* state in which our modern ways of thinking have led the mind. The situation has bred mental disease in us which, because of its prevalence, is labelled "normal."

If, in order to lay the seed of new growth, a Teacher must accept the idea that such work "proves in every case *moral death* to the revealers, who bring to light any of these old, old truths," even though "it gives LIFE and REGENERATION to those who are fit to profit" by such teaching, then we can see the responsibility laid upon us to continue the work begun by the most recent *"seed-sacrifice."*

If we would avoid becoming sectarian or too literalistic, this thought may be crucial. One way to avoid these pitfalls may be to keep in mind that the word "mission" is an abstract symbol for a condition we all have in common. Thus, the sunflowers, as well as

the sage, have a mission to perform. By giving serious consideration to H.P.B.'s work, its significance, and place in the Theosophical Movement, we do not become philoBlavatskyists. Especially is this true if we are careful to keep such consideration within the perspective of a larger context.

Madame Blavatsky (so far as I know) never directly claimed so, but it seems clear that she carried on the reincarnating portion of a work of the early centuries of Christianity, a work associated with teachers in Tibet who represent a specific effort dating back to the early third race. Just as she is the spark or *sacrifice for new growth* sent out by the "ancestral heart" of the planet, so the body of writings she left behind serve such a function for the movement.

Now if this beginning reflection is correct we can see that all new growth may receive inspiration from the *ideational base* she left us; that is, if we are to remain a viable spiritual movement, the original base of ideas must be adhered to in the same way an acorn follows the reincarnating pattern it carries with itself, even though the original physical seed sacrifices itself that the tree may sprout and begin to become a reality.

> In Esoteric Philosophy, every physical particle corresponds to and depends on its higher *noumenon*. (*S.D.* I, 218 fn.)

> The germ will become the spiritual potency in the physical cell that guides the development of the embryo, and which is the cause of the hereditary transmission of faculties and all the inherent qualities . . . (*Ibid.*, 219.)

In the abstract sense of the movement as a whole H.P.B. seems to be the connecting link between us and a larger *context-of-effort* having its physical counterpart or focus in the East, just as our *Manas* is the connecting link between the physical and the metaphysical. In the physical sense of the Theosophical Movement's "body," she, Mr. Judge and Mr. Crosbie make an interesting focus for study; especially when their adherence to a hierarchy of effort is considered. That is, H.P.B. pointed to the Masters as the source of her inspiration, Mr. Judge pointed primarily to her, and Mr. Crosbie emphasized the work of H.P.B. and Judge. One can easily see similar "hierarchies" of structure in nature and realize the idea that the lower positions in a structural body tend to communicate through the position or plane directly beyond in order that there may be a healthy and natural pattern of growth: it is, as A. H. Maslow might say, "a self-actualizing process."

We can see an instance of this process in the layers of bark on a tree, each of which has a distinctive mission to perform in relation to the layer that precedes and follows—to one, the duties of devotion, of a child to its parents; and to the other, the duties of a parent, that of metaphysical birth through intelligent self-sacrifice.

> When, moved by the law of Evolution, the Lords of Wisdom infused into him the spark of consciousness, the first feeling it awoke to life and activity was a sense of solidarity, of one-ness with his spiritual creators. As the child's first feeling is for its mother and nurse, so the first aspirations of the awakening consciousness in primitive man were for those whose element he felt within himself, and who yet were outside, and independent of him. *Devotion* arose out of that feeling, and became the first and foremost motor in his nature; for it is the only one which is natural in our heart, which is innate in us, and which we find alike in human babe and the young of the animal. (*S.D.* I, 210.)

If this is the duty of devotion we owe and from which our differentiated pattern of effort will most naturally flow, it still is only part, for we owe another duty of making this physical journey an *intelligent* self-sacrifice. Do we perhaps "belong" to the Theosophical Movement, to a larger context of this mundane world? This movement will find its *universal base* active or latent as the result of innumerable individual efforts which compose the vehicle. Our understanding of the sentence, "Do not work merely for the Theosophical Society, but *through* it for Humanity" (*Five Messages,* p. 26), may have much to do with the intelligent appreciation of those efforts.

It may be that by strict adherence to and assimilation of the Teachings which H.P.B. transmitted; by reflecting, brooding and becoming a carrier for the knowledge as originally presented, we will become a beneficent and unifying factor of health radiating through the Theosophical Movement; and from it, to all:

> As mankind is essentially of one and the same essence, and that essence is one—infinite, uncreate and eternal, whether we call it God or Nature—nothing, therefore, can affect one nation or one man without affecting all other nations and all other men. (*Key to Theosophy,* p. 41.)

THE GODS OF NATURE

THE manifested world, when perceived merely through the senses, appears to be composed of tangible objects, solid in constitution. When viewed through the proper instruments, however, it is discovered that all objects are composed of vibrating units—the different rates of vibration causing variations of color, qualities, form, etc. But Esoteric Science penetrates even deeper into the constitution of "matter" and says:

> Atoms and Monads, associated or dissociated, simple or complex, are, from the moment of the first differentiation, but the *principles,* corporeal, psychic and Spiritual, of the "Gods," themselves the Radiations of primordial nature. (*S.D.* I, 633.)

What a strange thought—that atoms and monads are *"principles* of the 'Gods'," i.e., "garments," the matter in which they clothe themselves. Even the "so-called *seven* elements, of which five have already manifested and asserted their existence, are the garments, *the veil,* of . . . deity," says H. P. Blavatsky (*S.D.* I, 460). Is it any wonder that "worship was offered [to these gods] by the ignorant, and simple, respectful recognition by the wiser"?

Perhaps if we understood this, we could see the need for a due reverence for Nature; reverence for other human beings, for the gods, for the sky and the rain, the air and the fire. We might then intuit why the attitude towards these things is important, and why the *Gita* says: "He who enjoyeth what hath been given unto him by them [the gods], and offereth not a portion unto them, is even as a thief." We might even see why there are healthy, reposeful, fruitful parts of the earth, and harsh, barren, volcanic parts; calm waves, and mountainous seas which batter the rocks and ships; balmy breezes that soothe, and hurricanes that tear asunder the trees and the habitations of men.

We suffer today because we pay attention only to the garments and not to the indwelling, informing soul. We tear these garments to shreds at our will, searching for the "soul" of the atom, not realizing that if the soul is found it will not be "matter" but the Life which

uses the atom as a garment. Garment after garment will have to be torn away before we reach the Radiations or primordial Matter. Before that stage is reached, however, we will have to develop the capacity to understand.

A study of the Pythagorean teaching will help us if we see this teaching as pertaining to the manifested, as well as the unmanifested, realms. There, we learn that the possibility of action arises from, yet in, the One Absolute Reality. As It stirs, or comes to (outward) Life, so It rays out from and in itself its own Nature. H.P.B. explains this (*Transactions,* p. 106) as follows:

> The Ray (the Pythagorean Monad) descending from "no-place" (*Aloka*), shoots like a falling star through the planes of non-being into the first world of being, and gives birth to Number One; then branching off, to the right, it produces Number Two; turning again to form the base-line it begets Number Three, and thence ascending again to Number One, it finally disappears therefrom into the realms of non-being.

In other words, the Pythagorean Triangle symbolizes the Three-in-One: Spirit, or Father; Matter, or Mother; and Son, the result of their union, forming the base-line which unites them. From the base-line comes all manifestation. Unless we grasp the fact that the base-line is the combination of all three aspects—the Father, the Spiritual Ray; the Mother, Substance: and the Son, the Creative Force in matter and form—we shall see only a material universe. But if we "see" every point in space as a reflection of this first triangle—see it in every solar system, every planet, every atom—we "know" a *living* universe.

Yet a further step is necessary for a fuller understanding of the manifested universe. For since we cannot separate any part of Kosmos from any other part, high or low, it becomes obvious that the triangle must also contain the reflection of its Source, thus making the reflection *four*fold. Taking the triangle, not as a plane, but as a solid, we have a pyramid on a square base. This pyramid, when reflecting itself in matter, becomes reversed; so that we find the apex flung down into the very depth of materiality. The gloriousness of the One has become veiled in the garments of illusion; the "dewdrop has become a speck of mire!"

To know this, it is said, is to know the secret of life. It enables us to visualize the diamond in the piece of coal, the dewdrop in the mire, the heart of the Christ in the darkened soul of the criminal. But

before the diamond is found, the dewdrop cleansed, the blackened soul purified, there are many stages of recovery. The first step is the recognition of the possibility; the second is the continuous, unremitting search for means of transmutation.

Theosophy has affirmed that the Universe is sevenfold, and so is man. Both are "gods" veiled in garments of illusion. Reach the God in man, and the God in Nature has been found; reach the God in Nature, and the God in Man has been found. To understand the one triangle means that all triangles are understood. To reach the apex of one triangle means that the apex of all has been reached. While we limit our view to the base-line we are tied down to matter, tied to an almost infinite number of lives, to pain and suffering, to uselessness and the curse of frustration. But if we rise to the apex of the triangle on any plane, we are like the flier who sees beneath him a vast area of land which would require a man on foot many hours or days to traverse, but which from that altitude and at that speed is passed over in a few minutes. Thus we might see, if we could look "down" on the vast panorama of Eternity, the continuity of many "lives" in which past, present, and future seem as one. Only as we walk on the ground do we have to traverse step by step the road, unable to see beyond the obstructions of time and space. Seen with the eye of Spirit, however, obstacles appear in their proper proportion, become but specks in the larger view.

Above, the horizon spreads out, limitless. Man is a point of consciousness mid-way between earth and heaven. In him are focussed the immensity of Space and the limitations of earth. He reflects both. When he realizes to the full that *he* is both reflector and a chooser of what he reflects, he will be able to direct the vision of the Above onto the gloom below and transmute the dark diversity of the below into the Oneness of the Above. Then, indeed, he becomes the triangle, the three-in-one, the four, the sacred Tetraktys.

This process must go on at every stage in the vastness of manifestation, for perfection can never be reached. Often, seeking for this union of ourselves with the All, we strive to take a short cut, as we think, by destroying in ourselves that aspect of the triangle which is the Mother. The functions of the Mother do not cease with the birth of the child. Rather, her self-sacrifice goes on throughout life, and even throughout Devachan. The child lives through her and she lives in the child. All beings are the result of Father-Mother, therefore all things are of the same parentage, all are brethren, whether

we are dealing with human families or with other complex forms, or with cells or atoms. No child can, therefore, progress without helping all other children to progress, and no man can know the Father unless he can recognize the Father in every form of matter. No man can know the Mother unless he can recognize Her *as* every form of matter. No man can know himself as a Son unless he can sense the Son in every form of matter.

As the ray of sunlight falls through a prism it shows itself in various colors. The rain falls crystal clear to become absorbed by the earth—its glory gone, though its usefulness remains. So the bright Son, who unites in Himself the glory of Spirit and the radiance of the true Matter, takes on the dull garments composed of less-evolved "sons." While using these garments in his own life, for the sustenance of his body and as the means of progress emotionally and mentally, he must vitalize the "sons" which lie hidden within these sheaths.

Is is necessary, therefore, to note that Nature is not merely gods and atoms, but gods, *monads,* and atoms—the monads being the unit, or veil, or first garment of the gods, which, focusing the nature of that god, enables him to remain an "individual," separate and distinct throughout a manvantara, however lost for a time to our sight. *Manasic* evolution is the path of the human Monad, awakening both to the knowledge of its garment of matter and of its god, of which it, in turn, is the garment. Also, the recognition of the Great Heart of the Universe, which pulsates throughout every atom of matter.

This process of awakening is re-enacted continually: with every dawn, the gradual arousal of bird and plant and man, and their entering the current of the day's events. When we become aware of this process of re-awakening to Life, we see evidences of it everywhere: in mother-love, whether of animals or human beings; in the radiance of the sun and the beauty of the moon; in the movement of the ocean and of the clouds in the sky; in the busy life of the hedges and fields; in yoga, or union, of a man with his God.

Only in man is the possibility of conscious creation. When he uses this function in harmony with the One Creative Force, then indeed will there be harmony throughout all manifestation.

YOUTH FORUM

Pride seems the most insidious and powerful of human vices, probably because it feeds on human virtue. It is therefore a strong indictment when outsiders, and particularly Christians, voice the suspicion that the Theosophical philosophy, with its emphasis on man's innate divinity, does much to foster this sense of pride. Has such an accusation any basis in truth?

Theosophists, too, have tendencies toward pride in all its forms —from that stiff pride which is almost synonymous with a fear of people to that giggling what-a-good-boy-am-I feeling which bubbles up after even the most minor good deed. Both Christians and Theosophists have this human quality to deal with, and from outward appearances it would be difficult to tell which of them deals with it best. Yet at the same time it must be recognized that there is an enormous difference in the approaches. A literal, theological Christian is convinced that he is essentially a creature of sin, a creation destined to return to the dust from which he was formed, unless through an act of divine grace he is swept from the eternal darkness of death into realms of eternal light. For him, then, humility is constantly associated with humiliation. His object is to eradicate systematically all his pride, his desires—his "sins." It is only when he has become completely "dead to himself" and to this world that he may (in one of those beautiful turns of phrases so common in Christian literature) suddenly become alive to the world of the divine. But if this transformation occurs, it is not because man, a congenital sinner, has caused it. As Augustine indicates, it is not within man's power to know when an act of grace will occur, or even *if* it will occur; but to strive at all times to be worthy of that grace.

It must be admitted that such stoical self-abnegation is often impressive. One might almost say that, given a different stress or seen from a different point of view, all this would become pure Theosophy. As it is now, Christian doctrine differs from Theosophy in that it declares that man may have a relationship with God, that God's

spirit may deign to dwell within the purified human heart, whereas Theosophy suggests that if man knew everything about himself, he would know God, for in essence he *is* God, just as a ray of sunlight is the sun. The difference is one of centering—the Christian view being just a bit lop-sided.

In a sense, of course, there is some truth even in the separate God view, once our "point" of view—the place where we make our moral stand—has been slightly shifted, brought into the heart of life. For really, we are separated by an enormous gulf from the Deity within ourselves. Even when we say "I," we are not speaking from that effulgent, central position. As H.P.B. has expressed it (*S.D.* I, 39): "The existences belonging to every plane of being, up to the highest Dhyan-Chohans, are in degree, of the nature of shadows cast by a magic lantern on a colourless screen; but all things are relatively real, for the cogniser is also a reflection, and the things cognised are therefore as real to him as himself." And again, what Augustine says about divine grace would, within a slightly different context, constitute a most powerful expression of a Theosophical truth.

Yet that slight change in context can effect an enormous change in one's whole approach to life. A real Christian must struggle desperately to kill out sin—and it is here that the implications of the command to become "dead to oneself" become terrifyingly clear, since to the Christian, sin is an essential, inseparable, part of man's nature. A true Theosophist, on the other hand, would not be so passionately engaged in rooting out sin, for he would know that feelings of aversion are as binding as feelings of affection. He would realize (at first perhaps only intellectually) that he is not *in essence* composed of sin; and gradually, with patience and dispassionate determination, he would impress this realization upon deeper and deeper planes of his being, as also the realization that "living in sin" is simply not a practical course of action from a long-range point of view. It is only when a person does not allow his errors and weaknesses more importance than they deserve, when in fact he can so live that they arouse in him no emotional reaction whatever, either for or against them, that he may forever conquer them.

But then, one may again object, it seems that our sins are to be overcome through a proud disdain for them; yet through what are we to overcome that pride?

Such an objection, however, indicates a misunderstanding of what

has just been said, for pride is never needed for the overcoming of our sins—and neither is that self-destructive humility advocated by Christianity. There is another kind of humility, a kind which is positive because it does not stop at saying that we are low hateful creatures, but goes on to add that we have the potentiality to become gods. It is positive also because it implies a tremendous responsibility. As we become stronger and wiser, we become more and more capable of helping all mankind and all life, until, having mastered all that this earth can teach, and having learned to see the meaning in every experience, we may give of ourselves completely and become the humble servants of all that lives. Then the weight of our responsibility would be balanced by the buoyant elation of our love, so that we would stand weightless, with infinity ahead of us and infinity behind us, and untold myriads of brothers at our side. Pride would be out of the question.

Such an intimate relationship with the countless forms and intelligences of life might be difficult for a Christian to achieve, since he has been taught that nature was given to man for him to use as he sees fit. In fact, there may be a broad tendency for men who are constantly humiliated through their religious beliefs to become quite harsh and Jehovah-like with the lower forms of nature, possibly even with their own families. At any rate, although a Theosophist (for once in the Christian spirit) should judge not, he might at least be justified in suggesting that the atmosphere generated by Christianity has more in common with death than with life, with human limitation than with human possibility, with authority than with individual integrity and search.

At any rate, if the Theosophical tenets really do foster feelings of pride, at least they also provide hope and a means for overcoming pride. That means is humility, but a humility which does not crush the human spirit, but rather heals and feeds it; for it is the humility of aspiration.

letters • questions • comment

I detect in Theosophists a tendency to retreat behind philosophical generalities whenever crucial matters of current debate arise. Yet our daily living is made of choices which involve specifics. We live in *history, not outside it, and to say that choices made by nations or factions within nations are simply "Karma" seems to me to beg all questions of immediacy.*

Recently, in a Theosophical discussion group, American entry into World War II was mentioned—with reference to the then President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Now, presidents are obviously political figures, as well as whatever else they may be, and implicit criticism of any course of action taken by a president usually awakens counteractive partisanships. It is clear that such arguments are definitely "side-issues" from the standpoint of Theosophical philosophy, but it also appears unnatural to exclude, on principle, any *subject from the area of Theosophical discussion. Many Theosophists, I think, have been frustrated by this sort of impasse. Any suggestions?*

This is not an attempt to beg a good question, but there are times in the lives of all men, even incipient sages, when the turn from specifics to philosophical generalities is an "advance" rather than a "retreat." It is true that a generality, no matter how ideally constructed or based, does not furnish the resolution of an issue. But if it becomes a focal point for reflection, a resolution may take place in the mind of the individual. For instance, it is almost trite to say that no one ever resolves anyone else's mind for him, yet it is perennially necessary to reaffirm this truth.

Partisan argument, particularly of the religious or political variety, is typically motivated by a desire to justify or a desire to convert—and neither desire, no matter how craftily implemented, can be constructive except by unlikely coincidence. The First Object of the Theosophical Society meant to provide a platform which would en-

courage impartiality respecting diverse views, regardless of religious or organizational background. But the occult intent behind the formulation of this First Object, at least in the mind of H. P. Blavatsky, was clearly to encourage the realization that there is One Higher Self in all men. In her article, "Our Three Objects," H.P.B. stated that all real progress towards "brotherhood" to which the Society could lay claim was due to various degrees of realization of the Higher Self. Now, one of the first inescapable implications of this awakening is that we are all part of one another. In the family, we are father and mother as well as the child, the brother or sister as well as the parent. We "improve" our "interpersonal relationships" to the extent that we view the utterances or decisions of another as if we were in fact that other. So is the more complicated area of politics only seemingly far removed from questions of the "Higher Self."

Habits of political thinking externalize, while the habits of philosophical thinking internalize. In discussing such a matter as the personality of a president in relation to the events which led towards American entry into World War II, one can well proceed from a certain echo of "Higher Self" psychology which finds expression in American government. The President of the United States, any president, is of course a man with a certain quota of predilections, prejudices, and weaknesses. But he is also elected to high office, and his election, however much chicanery may be conceded to have accomplished it, therefore represents the natural "Karma" of the time, place, and circumstances with which we are all identified. In the instance mentioned, it accomplishes no good at all to criticize what a certain man did with his prerogatives of choice, so long as we consider that man as external to ourselves. If, on the other hand, we criticize his acts as if we, not he, had thought as he did and therefore acted as he did, we can learn something—because we have replaced the barrenness of criticizing something outside ourselves with searching self-criticism. Would we, for example, given the same problem the president had, now make those same choices today in a comparable situation? Whatever the answer, the result of asking such a question honestly will be a greater clarity of mind within ourselves, a clearer understanding of what opinions in political life to support and which to oppose, of what sort of man to vote for and why.

The first step for the man who cannot immediately overcome the

effects of years of political bias is to search for a sympathetic understanding regarding men against whom he has allowed himself to be prejudiced. Just as no mortal acts in perfection, so is it true that *some* defensible or even idealistic reason may be advanced for the very action or decision we deplore. To find that reason, or series of reasons, is a necessary step in our own education.

How to Enlighten Convictions

There is no once-acquired conviction that you should cease to work upon. For, although its basis of truth may be very firm and secure for you, it is wholly worth while to stir up, air, and retemper your conviction and confront it with new aspects of reality and exhibit its strength in new conflicts and carry it with you to explore new lands of thought, new seas of incredulity and doubt, which it can subject to its sway, increasing its greatness. You should corroborate it from within itself by rendering the connection between its component parts stronger and more harmonious.

For if your conviction is a true one, is it not your duty to enter each time further into its truth and to adhere to it as far as possible with stronger assuredness and love? Work, then, upon the conviction thus acquired. Correlate it with new ideas, new experiences, new examples of contradiction, new spectacles from the theater of the world. If your conviction persists and prevails, how much more tried its energy will be! How many more elements will it have conquered, arranging about itself, by its own virtue and efficacy, everything you have brought it in contact with! The firmest conviction will be that which maintains the greatest number of ideas about it and succeeds in uniting them in the most cohesive and concordant relationship.

—Jose E. Rodo

THE DUAL SERPENTINE FORCE

THERE is but one light, and there is but one darkness," says a Siamese proverb. *Daemon est Deus inversus,* the Devil is the shadow of God, states the universal kabalistic axiom. Could light exist but for the primeval darkness? And did not the brilliant, sunny universe first stretch its infant arms from the swaddling bands of dark and dreary chaos? Three and a half centuries before Christ, Plato expressed his opinion of evil by saying that "there is in matter a blind, refractory force, which resists the will of the Great Artificer." This blind force, under Christian influx, was made to see and become responsible; it was transformed into Satan.

"The Aryans had no devil," says Max Muller. "Pluto, though of a sombre character, was a very respectable personage; and Loki (the Scandinavian), though a mischievous person, was not a fiend. The German Goddess, *Hell,* too, like Proserpine, had once seen better days. Thus, when the Germans were indoctrinated with the idea of a real devil, the Semitic Seth, Satan or *Diabolus,* they treated him in the most good-humored way." The same may be said of hell. Hades was quite a different place from our region of eternal damnation, and might be termed rather an intermediate state of purification. Neither does the Scandinavian *Hel* or *Hela,* imply either a state or a place of punishment; for when Frigga, the grief-stricken mother of Bal-dur, the white god, who died and found himself in the dark abodes of the shadows (Hades) sent Hermod, a son of Thor, in quest of her beloved child, the messenger found him in the inexorable region—alas! but still comfortably seated on a rock, and reading a book. The Norse kingdom of the dead is moreover situated in the higher latitudes of the Polar regions; it is a cold and cheerless abode, and neither the gelid halls of Hela, nor the occupation of Baldur present the least similitude to the blazing hell of eternal fire and the miserable "damned" sinners with which the Church so generously peoples it.

No more is it the Egyptian Amenthes, the region of judgment and

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NOTE:—A student's collation from *Isis Unveiled.*

purification; nor the Onderah—the abyss of darkness of the Hindus; for even the fallen angels hurled into it by Siva, are allowed by Parabrahma to consider it as an intermediate state, in which an opportunity is afforded them to prepare for higher degrees of purification and redemption from their wretched condition. The Gehenna of the *New Testament* was a locality outside the walls of Jerusalem; and mentioning it, Jesus used but an ordinary metaphor. Whence then came the dreary dogma of hell, the Archimedian lever of Christian theology, with which they have succeeded to hold in subjection the numberless millions of Christians for nineteen centuries? Assuredly not from the Jewish Scriptures, and we appeal for corroboration to any well-informed Hebrew scholar. The only designation of something approaching hell in the *Bible* is *Gehenna* or Hinnom, a valley near Jerusalem, where was situated Tophet, a place where a fire was perpetually kept for sanitary purposes.

The first inquiry is whether the term *Devil,* as here used, actually represents the malignant Deity of the Christians, or an antagonistic, blind force—the dark side of nature. By the latter we are not to understand the manifestation of any evil principle that is *malum in se,* but only the shadow of the Light, so to say. The theories of the kabalists treat of it as a force which is antagonistic, but at the same time essential to the vitality, evolving, and vigor of the good principle. Plants would perish in their first stage of existence, if they were kept exposed to the constant sunlight; the night alternating with the day is essential to their healthy growth and development. Goodness, likewise, would speedily cease to be such, were it not alternated with its opposite. In human nature, evil denotes the antagonism of matter to the spiritual, and each is accordingly purified thereby. In the cosmos, the equilibrium must be preserved; the operation of the two contraries produces harmony, like the centripetal and centrifugal forces, and are necessary to each other. If one is arrested, the action of the other will immediately become destructive.

Plutarch remarks that by Typhon was understood anything violent, unruly, and disorderly. The overflowing of the Nile was called by the Egyptians Typhon. Plutarch, who was a rigid, orthodox Greek, and never known to much compliment the Egyptians, testifies in his *Isis and Osiris* to the fact that far from worshipping the Devil (of which Christians accused them), they despised more than they dreaded Typhon. In his symbol of the opposing, obstinate

power of nature, they believed him to be a poor, struggling, half-dead divinity. Thus, even at that remote age, we see the ancients too enlightened to believe in a personal devil.

The identity of Satan with Typhon can scarcely be doubted upon reading the account in *Job* of his appearance with the sons of God, before the Lord. He accuses Job of a readiness to curse the Lord to his face upon sufficient provocation. So Typhon, in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead,* figures as the *accuser.* The resemblance extends even to the names, for one of Typhon's appellations was *Seth,* or *Seph;* as Satan, in Hebrew, means an adversary. In Arabic the word is *Shatana,* to be adverse, to persecute.

This personification, denominated Satan, is to be contemplated from three different planes: the *Old Testament,* the Christian Fathers, and the ancient Gentile attitude. He is supposed to have been represented by the Serpent in the Garden of Eden; nevertheless, the epithet of Satan is nowhere in the Hebrew sacred writings applied to that or any other variety of ophidian. The Brazen Serpent of Moses was worshipped by the Israelites as a god; being the symbol of Esmun-asklepius the Phoenician Iao. Indeed, the character of Satan himself is introduced in the book of *Chronicles* in the act of instigating King David to number the Israelitish people, an act elsewhere declared specifically to have been moved by Jehovah himself. The inference is unavoidable that the two, Satan and Jehovah, were regarded as identical. (1 Chron., xxi. 1; 2 Sam., xxiv. 1.) The dogma of the Devil and redemption seems to be based upon two passages in the *New Testament*: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil." "And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon; and the Dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great Dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." (1 John, iii. 8.)

The temptation, or probation, of Jesus is the most dramatic occasion in which Satan appears. As if to prove the designation of Apollo, Æsculapius and Bacchus, *Diabolos,* or son of Zeus, he is also styled *Diabolos,* or accuser. The scene of the probation was the wilderness. In the desert about the Jordan and Dead Sea were the abodes of the "sons of the prophets," and the Essenes. These ascetics used to subject their neophytes to probations, analogous to

the *tortures* of the Mithraic rites; and the temptation of Jesus was evidently a scene of this character. Hence, in the *Gospel according to Luke,* it is stated that "the Diabolos, having completed the probation, left him for a specific time, and Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee." But the . . . Devil, in this instance, is evidently no malignant principle, but one exercising discipline. In this sense the terms Devil and Satan are repeatedly employed. Thus, when Paul was liable to undue elation by reason of the abundance of revelations or epoptic disclosures, there was given to him "a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan," to check him. (2 Cor. 2;7.)

The story of Satan in the *Book of Job* is of a similar character. He is introduced among the "Sons of God," presenting themselves before the Lord, as in a Mystic initiation. Micaiah the prophet described a similar scene, where he "saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of Heaven standing by Him," with whom He took counsel, which resulted in putting "a lying spirit into the mouth of the prophet of Ahab." The Lord counsels with Satan, and gives him *carte blanche* to test the fidelity of Job. He is stripped of his wealth and family, and smitten with a loathsome disease. In his extremity, his wife doubts his integrity and exhorts him to worship God, as he is about to die. His friends all beset him with accusations, and finally the Lord, the chief hierophant himself, taxes him with the uttering of words in which there is no wisdom, and with contending with the Almighty. To this rebuke Job yielded, making this appeal: "I will demand of thee, and thou shalt declare unto me: wherefore do I abhor myself and mourn in dust and ashes?" Immediately he was vindicated. . . .

In all these scenes there is manifested no such malignant diabolism as is supposed to characterize "the adversary of souls." The allegory of Job, if correctly understood, will give the key to this whole matter of the Devil, his nature and office; and will substantiate our declarations. Let no pious individual take exception to this designation of *allegory*. Myth was the favorite and universal method of teaching in archaic times.

According to des Mousseaux, *"the Devil is the chief pillar of Faith.* He is one of the grand personages whose life is closely allied to that of the church; and without his speech which issued out so triumphantly from the mouth of the Serpent, *his medium,* the fall of man could not have taken place. Thus, if it was not for him, the

Saviour, the Crucified, the Redeemer, would be but the most ridiculous of supernumeraries, and the Cross an insult to good sense!" This writer, be it remembered, is only the faithful echo of the church, which anathematizes equally the one who *denies* God and him who *doubts* the objective existence of Satan.

The modern Devil is their principal heritage from the Roman Cybele, "Babylon, the Great Mother of the idolatrous and abominable religions of the earth."

We ought, perhaps, to make a brief notice of the European Devil. He is the genius who deals in sorcery, witchcraft, and other mischief. The Fathers taking the idea from the Jewish Pharisees, made devils of the Pagan gods, Mithras, Serapis, and others. The Roman Catholic Church followed by denouncing the former worship as commerce with the powers of Darkness. The *malefecii* and witches of the middle ages were thus but the votaries of the proscribed worship. The votaries of the ancient worship were persecuted and put to death on charges of witchcraft. The Albigenses, descendants of the Gnostics, and the Waldenses, precursors of the Protestants, were hunted and massacred under like accusations. Martin Luther himself was accused of companionship with Satan in proper person. The whole Protestant world still lies under the same imputation. There is no distinction in the judgments of the Church between dissent, heresy, and witchcraft. And except where civil authority protects, they are alike capital offenses. Religious liberty the Church regards as intolerance.

This necessary Evil, dignified by the epithet of "Father of Lies," was, according to the clergy, the founder of all the world-religions of ancient time, and of the heresies, or rather heterodoxies, of later periods, as well as the *Deus ex Machina* of modern Spiritualism. In the exceptions which we take to this notion, we protest that we do not attack true religion or sincere piety. Perhaps in doing this we resemble Don Quixote, because these things are only windmills. Nevertheless, let it be remembered that they have been the occasion and pretext for the slaughtering of more than fifty millions of human beings since the words were proclaimed: "LOVE YOUR ENEMIES."

on the lookout

Zen and the Theosophic Tradition

The continuing popularity of lectures and books on Zen Buddhism reflects the widespread desire for mysticism without metaphysics, a journey of the spirit without benefit of clergy. From one standpoint, Western Zen is a phase of Existentialism, but because of its origin in some of the Mahayana teachings, the student encounters intimations of an endless journey of soul through many manifestations. A new edition of *Zen Buddhism,* by Christmas Humphreys (first published in 1949 in London) has been brought out as an excellently-printed pocket volume (Macmillan, 1962). Mr. Humphreys has been president of the London Buddhist Society, and, as a student of Theosophical literature, frequently makes reference to the implications of Zen for philosophy based upon the idea of the reincarnating soul. (Mr. Humphrey's work, incidentally, was once serialized in the *Theosophical Forum,* when it was edited at Covina, Calif.)

In a chapter titled "Zen for the West," Mr. Humphreys writes:

> The West is ripe for Buddhism in one form or another. As already indicated, the Theosophical Societies which, with thousands of individuals, together make up the Theosophical Movement, have for half a century taught the unity of life, Karma and rebirth, the impersonal approach to life and the universe, and many another principle which, as the two movements sprang from the same source, no genuine student of both will be surprised to find that they teach in common. And one psychologist at least has found the complementary background, an unconscious predilection for Buddhism, which readily explains its increasing popularity.

"We Are All Near-Buddhists"

Mr. Humphreys quotes Graham Howe, who has said: "Within ourselves we have our Eastern aspect, deeply buried, and yet still acting as our hidden source of light. In the course of their work many psychologists have found, as the pioneer work of C. G. Jung has shown, that we are all near-Buddhists on our hidden sides. He further explains how patients tend to produce what amounts to a

common pattern of unconscious material which has much in common with eastern art and philosophy. To read a little Buddhism is to realize that the Buddhists knew, 2,500 years ago, far more about modern problems of psychology than they have yet been given credit for. . . . We are now rediscovering the ancient Wisdom of the East, and new knowledge is again coming from that direction as it has always done in the past."

Continuing this theme, Mr. Humphreys remarks that "as the process of satori seems to be an irruption of the unconscious content into the conscious mind, it may well be that the western unconscious, which already contains and seeks an outlet for this spiritual force, will welcome the opportunity."

Spiritual Self-reliance

A point of considerable importance appears in the following paragraphs:

> Alan Watts is possibly right when he says that Europeans test the value of a religion by the success which it achieves in bringing harmony into society as a whole, by its capacity to be reached and understood by "all sorts and conditions of men." The East thinks differently.
>
> It has no use for "mass religions," and knowledge is something sacred, to be handed by those who have earned it to those who may be trusted not to abuse it. Atomic energy should not be in the hands of the a-moral few, and in the East it would never be "revealed" save to those who would use it only in the service of mankind. As for social service, this is a result and not a cause; it is, or should be, the result of right thinking and, what is more rare and far more important, right understanding. At its best, and the phrase is coming to mean no more than political interference, it is the effect of a true religion or philosophy; it does not in itself supply that need.

Notes on Zen Philosophy

A slender volume published by the Peter Pauper Press (1959) provides corroboration for the view that, while Zen teaches no specific doctrine for the immortality of the soul, it none the less acknowledges the reincarnation context of Buddhist teaching. In the opening pages of this book we note the following:

> By studying to find wisdom, living to do good, and concentrating to achieve control over mind and body, we can escape from the dominance of the physical world, and we can transmit a good inheritance of *karma* to our later incarnations. *Karma* has

been defined as "that moral kernel of any being which survives death and continues in transmigration."

Buddha taught that a succession of beings, each improving its common inheritance of *karma,* can eventually rise to an existence entirely free of this world: the state of *nirvana.*

All Is Holy

In Japanese this state of enlightenment is called *satori.* In *satori* we are able to look beyond our immediate world into the universe of original, eternal, Absolute Being—often called the Great Emptiness—which *was* before our world was formed, and *will be* after it disappears. In this condition we lose our sense of Self, and know ourselves to be part of the great Oneness of all. Knowing ourselves to be part of Absolute Being, our ego and our problems of ego—sin, pain, poverty, fear—all dissolve. This is salvation in Zen terms.

Having reached the state of *satori,* we become aware that *everything* in all this world about us, all other living and non-living things, even our lowest animal functions, are part of Absolute Being—and are thus essentially holy. Mountains and rocks, trees and grass-blades, elephants and microbes, all share equally in the Eternal.

This awareness permits us to go about our daily life with a new freedom, a new sureness, a new sense of doing the work of Absolute Being even in the smallest or dirtiest task of the present life. It is this sense also that makes the tea ceremony in Japan a ritual of devotion; that makes a seventeen-syllable haiku poem a universal statement of faith; that makes a quick brush-drawing a gesture of piety in Eternity.

"Theosophist Helena Blavatsky"

An article in a recent series in the *Christian Century,* "Victorian Heretics of London," presents a "thumbnail sketch" of the career of H. P. Blavatsky as interpreted by Dr. Warren Sylvester Smith. Theosophical students will, of course, protest Dr. Smith's repetitions of many time-worn charges against H.P.B., and with adequate reason. But it is also interesting to note Dr. Smith's willingness to leave the final evaluation of a "fabulous career" in the realm of enigmas. The sub-heading for the article is in the form of this query: "Was there something in this colorful 'priestess of the occult' that transcended mere charlatanry?"

Dr. Smith's orientation in respect to Madame Blavatsky may be said to be somewhere between the outright vilification of Gertrude Marvin Williams in *Priestess of the Occult* and John Symonds'

Madame Blavatsky: Magician and Medium. Of the two, the Symonds is infinitely preferable, while Dr. Smith steers a dubious middle course. In his last paragraph, however, the author returns to the "enigma" approach in an oblique manner—by way of the curious fact that Annie Besant, a woman of remarkable intellectual powers, turned to H.P.B. as a genuine teacher. Dr. Smith writes:

> Regardless of any latter-day analysis of Annie Besant's conversion to theosophy, the fact itself tends to make the power of Helena Blavatsky seem more mysterious, more potent than ever. Annie Besant was not one of the pampered rich or neurotic intellectuals whose sense of inadequacy or guilt provided H.P.B. her easiest conquests. Annie was a sophisticated, worldly idealist who had traded blows, on and off platform, with the best minds of her time, asking no quarter. She was one of a handful of names that could be counted on to fill any London lecture hall. And though she had read and reread the unfavorable report of the Society for Psychical Research, she chose to align herself with the Theosophical Society and its view of the universe—a view which, among other things, presumes seven planes of matter and takes reincarnation for granted.

The "Feet of Clay" Approach

Dr. Smith recognizes that Mrs. Williams' *Priestess of the Occult* was "most skeptical" of any true worth or genius in H.P.B., yet he repeats a good deal of Mrs. Williams' treatment—as for instance:

> Indeed, after her emergence from Russia following a disastrous marriage to General Nicephore Blavatsky at the age of 17, madame's history is more than vague until her appearance in New York in 1873, 25 years later. The Blavatsky legend at various intervals locates her—it is not always quite clear whether in the spirit or the flesh—in Tibet, learning from occult masters. But Miss Williams maintains that before H.P.B. came to America her masters were Egyptian and Greek and that only later did she shift to Eastern sources. In the meantime she somehow had become an accomplished spiritualist with an astonishing repertoire of "phenomena." It seems probable that she lived a sordid, hand-to-mouth existence for most of those "lost" years. There are suggestions that she became addicted to hashish.

Careless Comment on Isis Unveiled

Again, Dr. Smith seems unaccountably to prefer Mrs. Williams' evaluations of *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* to those of Mr. Symonds, stating, for example, that *Isis* "was not well received critically." This, in the face of enthusiastic reviews which then appeared in leading periodicals, two of which might be contrasted:

It must be acknowledged that she is a remarkable woman, who has read more, seen more, and thought more than most wise men. Her work abounds in quotations from a dozen different languages, not for the purpose of a vain display of erudition, but to substantiate her peculiar views. . . . Her pages are garnished with foot-notes establishing, as her authorities, some of the profoundest writers of the past. To a large class of readers, this remarkable work [*Isis Unveiled*] will prove of absorbing interest . . . demands the earnest attention of thinkers, and merits an analytic reading. (*Boston Evening Transcript.*)

* * *

One who reads the book carefully through, ought to know everything of the marvellous and mystical, except perhaps, the passwords. It is easy to forecast the reception of this book. With its striking peculiarities, its audacity, its versatility, and the prodigious variety of subjects which it notices and handles, it is one of the remarkable productions of the century. (*New York Herald.*)

Letters of Protest

Among the copies of several letters mailed by students of Theosophy to the *Christian Century,* we select the following for pertinence and tastefulness:

Editors, *Christian Century*:

I do not question the good faith of the Editors of the *Christian Century* in publishing the above article, but your good judgment and sense of fair play in allowing an article of this character to appear in your columns without first making an impartial study of the facts. I should think you owe it to your readers to become better informed, and at least look into the other side of the story. A noble mind is always wary of slanderous attacks on the reputations of others. With these thoughts in mind, I am enclosing herewith the book entitled *The Theosophical Movement, 1875-1950,* published by the Cunningham Press, Los Angeles, which is a revised and up-to-date edition of the volume *The Theosophical Movement* issued by E. P. Dutton in 1925.

Sincerely yours,

* * *

Editors, *Christian Century*:

The course of history has shown that those who bring unwelcome truths to mankind are first vilified and crucified and later regarded as great benefactors. If the *Christian Century* would keep up with the times, it would notice that such a change has begun to take place regarding the reputation of Mme. Blavatsky. As one illustration, take note of the change in the write-ups she has received in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.*

In the 11th edition she is branded as a charlatan, and the suggested bibliography cites the books that vilify her character. In the latest editions an entirely different tone is manifest, and not one aspersion on her character is made. For recommended bibliography they list all of Madame Blavatsky's books and letters—which, after all, is the best way to know a person ("By their fruits ye shall know them")—and not by the denunciations or praise showered on his head. . . .

Faithfully yours,

The Occult Side of H.P.B.

A letter on the nature of H.P.B., which appeared in John Eglinton's *A Memoir of A.E.* (the esteemed Irish poet), expresses a faith that there was a great deal in H.P.B. which "transcended mere charlatanry." The letter, dated 1935, was addressed to another writer, Sean O'Faolain, and reads as follows:

> You dismiss H. P. Blavatsky rather too easily as "hocus pocus." Nobody ever affected the thought of so many able men and women by "hocus pocus." The real source of her influence is to be found in *The Secret Doctrine,* a book on the religions of the world suggesting or disclosing an underlying unity between all great religions. It was a book which Maeterlinck said contained the most grandiose cosmogony in the world, and if you read it merely as a romantic compilation, it is one of the most exciting and stimulating books written for the last hundred years. It is paying a poor compliment to men like Yeats, Maeterlinck, and others, to men like Sir William Crookes, the greatest chemist of modern times, who was a member of her society, to Carter Blake, F.R.S., the anthropologist, and the scholars and scientists in many countries who read H. P. Blavatsky's books, to assume that they were attracted by "hocus pocus."
>
> If you are ever in the National Library, Kildare Street, and have a couple of hours to spare, you might dip into "The Proem" to *The Secret Doctrine,* and you will understand the secret of the influence of that extraordinary woman on her contemporaries. . . . You should not be misled by popular catchwords about "hocus pocus," but try to find out the real secret of H. P. Blavatsky's influence, which still persists strong as ever, as I have found over here [in London] among many intellectuals and well-known writers.

Research in Survival After Death

From Duke University comes the first issue of *Theta,* a bulletin published by the Psychical Research Foundation. (The Foundation, which began operating in January, 1961, is the only organiza-

tion devoted wholly to the promotion of scientific research on the problem of survival of personality after death.) *Theta,* as title, is not only the name of the bulletin, but also a substitute for *survival* when it means the "survival of the human personality or a part of it after the death of the body." *Theta* explains its function:

> The Foundation and its bulletin represent no position regarding survival except the belief that scientific observation and experimentation may lead to a solution. The bulletin is not intended as a substitute for other publications in psychical research and parapsychology. On the contrary one of its functions will be to direct readers to papers and books by abstracts or reviews. It will also discuss current researches and activities that touch on the survival question.

Field of Parapsychology

Theta summarizes the present perspective in its restricted field:

> In recent years psychologists have become increasingly aware of the importance to man of his attitude to death. As Herman Feifel says in his book, *The Meaning of Death,* a person's attitude toward death "can serve as an important organizing principle in determining how he conducts himself in life."
>
> To place theta within psychical research is not to exclude it from other disciplines. Parapsychology is related to all branches of scientific inquiry that deal with human personality and theta research will have to make full use of the discoveries and technical tools of such professions as psychology and neurology if it is to be effective.

Hypnosis—New Critiques

An article in the Los Angeles *Times* (June 2) by Joseph Hixon bears the title, "Hypnosis: Great Boon or Dangerous Game?" Mr. Hixon begins:

> Cures hives, aids digestion, eases pain, rejuvenates the aging sex glands. Fine for neurosis, pitcher's arm, boxer's morale, shortstop's legs. Will stop the smoking habit, over-indulgence in food and spirits; ends finger-nail biting; makes childbirth a pleasure.
>
> That catalog of therapeutic triumphs isn't taken from the label of a turn-of-the-century nostrum bottle. Those are the benefits hypnosis has been conferring on distressed human beings according to recent news reports and articles in professional medical journals.

Mr. Hixon quotes from a number of AMA "experts" on hypnosis, and by this means brings to light two concerns of consider-

able importance. First, Dr. Ralph Kaufman, director of psychiatry at Mt. Sinai Hospital, feels it necessary to point out: "Once a physician starts using hypnotism, the temptation is strong to extend its use into other areas of his practice. That's where the danger lies for those not familiar with basic knowledge of the mind and its workings." Dr. Harold Rosen, head of the AMA committee on hypnotism, also refuses to whitewash increased use of the hypnotic technique, stating that "unwise hypnosis by psychiatrically naïve therapists has, in a number of cases, effected symptom-cure but some patients have been decompensated emotionally and have become overtly psychotic or have committed suicide."

Relationship to Dependence

One of the most provocative and useful analyses of hypnotism appears in *Psychiatry* for August, 1962. Dr. Rudolf Dreikurs, a psychiatrist whose training began at the University of Vienna, suggests considerations in respect to hypnosis which are also found in the Theosophical evaluation. Dr. Dreikurs writes:

> Contrary to the assertions of many contemporary students of hypnosis that modern hypnosis no longer relies on the authority and power of the hypnotist over his subject, Barber, in his careful analysis of concepts, comes to the following conclusions: "Hypnosis involves an interpersonal relationship in which one person, the operator, restructures the perceptions and conceptions of the other person, the subject." An autohypnotized subject can experience only a fraction of the hypnotic phenomena. He cannot experience genuine age-regression, alternate personality, and antisocial behavior. "If the subject is not 'set' to 'follow suggestions', i.e., if he is not set to literally think as the operator wants him to think, no artificial aids can help the hypnotic process."

The Abdication of Responsibility

Dr. Dreikurs continues:

> The proponents of a routine use of hypnosis in dentistry, obstetrics, and surgery, and in the solution of personality problems and the correction of maladjustment of various kinds, seem to be succeeding to such a degree that psychiatrists, medical practitioners, educators, and philosophers soon will be unable to ignore the rather startling and dramatic cultural phenomenon—the abdication of democratic responsibility.
>
> Hypnosis will not continue as a therapeutic procedure, despite its present tremendous appeal and increasingly wide use. It does not fit into a democratic atmosphere, which emphasizes and re-

quires self-determination and self-respect. Both these necessary attributes of free men are endangered, and the development of a more adequate, new concept of man is obstructed by the wide and indiscriminate use of hypnosis. Careful studies are urgently needed of the effects of hypnosis on the personality make-up of the subject. It is known that an increased suggestibility facilitates the induction of hypnosis. It is possible, even probable, that hypnosis in turn increases a subject's suggestibility, perhaps for life. One can visualize many detrimental effects which a higher level of suggestibility in the population might produce, such as poorer judgment, inability for self-determination, and a lowered sense of responsibility.

"Depth" Criticism

While Dr. Dreikurs' discussion is professional and will command the attention of his colleagues, the basic tone is philosophical—and in harmony with the conception of *noëtic* man. The following is outstanding in relating the ominous context of most popular hypnotism to one of the central problems of our time, which he terms "individual responsibility, with the willingness and ability to discharge it." Dr. Dreikurs continues:

> People have become frightened by their newly won freedom, like freed slaves who longed for the master to take care of them and protect them. The hypnotist can well respond to the popular demand for such protection. He may be a "benevolent" autocrat—and in a democratic setting he has to be benevolent in order to be accepted as a master—but he is satisfying the needs of clients by exerting a control which they do not feel capable of assuming themselves. While the hypnotist may primarily concern himself with removing pains or easing stress, he actually satisfies a much deeper demand—he gives security through his mastery. Such mutual satisfaction in hypnosis—the patient finding relief and security, the hypnotist enjoying his therapeutic effectiveness and personal power—cannot fail to brighten considerably the prospects for even wider use of hypnotic practices in the near future. This development will come to an end only when the great harm which it does to mankind as a whole will become evident, even to practitioners.

The Most Widely Spoken Language?

USC and the Carnegie Corporation have announced a plan which will enable Southern California secondary schools to offer Chinese and Japanese language instruction this fall. According to the Los Angeles *Times* for April 21, "Normally, these classes are given only at college and university level. Dr. Theodore Chen, head of the

department of Asian and Slavic studies at USC, feels that California's proximity to the Orient and its sizable Oriental population are good reasons that the state be particularly concerned about stimulating more interest in Far Eastern affairs."

Dr. Chen hopes that the program will not be confined to Oriental students, making the following prophecy for the years to come:

> He envisions the world's most spoken language as having a future place in the offerings of California high schools. He feels the exposure of youth to Far Eastern studies in secondary schools will hasten the time when the nation's resources of persons knowledgeable in this field will be increased tremendously.

How Is This Significant?

In her general introduction to The Credo Series, Ruth Nanda Anshen speaks of the importance of language in arriving at an understanding of man's nature, his place in the world, and the interrelationship between nations and races:

> Theory and life always go together . . . Part of the meaning of our present turmoil may indeed lie in its being the means to reconcile thought and action. . . . Our effort is to create an image of man intelligible and unitary, microcosmic mirror of the greater macrocosm of which he is a part and in which he has his legitimate place in relation to the whole. . . . Man is now confronting himself with the compelling need to create an organic identification between what he *is* and what he *does*. . . . Language itself in our time has failed because man has forgotten that it is the mother of thought because of its analytical emphasis, and thus lacks ready means to convey associations, emotional or imaginative, that cluster around a subject and give to it a distinctive personal significance. In other words, the symbols by which man lives and has his being, that "tacit coefficient" of articulate knowledge that is unanalyzable, now knocks at the portals of consciousness waiting to be admitted.

The Chinese Language

Some interesting information regarding the Chinese language is provided by H. P. Blavatsky (*S.D.* I, 307):

> In the Chinese language, the alphabet of which may be read in any language, and which is only a little less ancient than the Egyptian alphabet of Thot, every word has its corresponding symbol conveying the word needed in a pictorial form. The language possesses many thousands of such symbol letters, or logograms, each meaning a whole word; for letters proper, or an alphabet, do not exist in the Chinese language any more than they did in the Egyptian till a far later period.